

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 JUSE-00
/081 W

-----130941Z 016325 /14

R 130855Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3022

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0395

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ETRD US MU

SUBJECT: FURTHER REPRESENTATION ON ARAB BOYCOTT

REF: MUSCAT 0347 (NOTAL)

1. AMBASSADOR'S MARCH 12 APPOINTMENT WITH COMMERCE MINISTER MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP RECENT BOYCOTT DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CENTRAL BANK OFFICIALS. IN INTRODUCING SUBJECT, EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON DESIRABILITY OF ADOPTION BY OMAN OF POSITIVE CERTIFICATION LANGUAGE AS HAS NOW BEEN DECIDED BY SAUDIS.

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2. MINISTER ZUBAIR SAID HE HAD READ SECRETARY VANCE'S FEB 28 STATEMENT WHICH AMBASSADOR HAD SENT HIM PREVIOUS WEEK. ZUBAIR THEN CAME UP WITH A SURPRISE. HE SAID THAT JUST TWO DAYS BEFORE OUR DISCUSSION HIS OWN MINISTRY HAD SUCCEEDED IN RELINQUISHING ALL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BOYCOTT POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION. ZUBAIR EXPLAINED THAT SINCE HE JOINED GOVERNMENT IN 1975 HE HAS BEEN PUSHING TO GET

OMAN CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT (WHICH FALLS UNDER ROYAL OMAN POLICE) TO TAKE OVER FROM MINISTRY OF COMMERCE THE ROUTINE DAILY TASK OF CHECKING ON IMPORTED GOODS AT ALL POINTS OF ENTRY TO ASSURE ADHERENCE TO ARAB BOYCOTT PROGRAM, AND TO HAVE FOREIGN MINISTRY ASSUME ALL POLICY RESPONSIBILITY ON THE SUBJECT. HE HAD FINALLY SUCCEEDED. FROM NOW ON, THE CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT AND FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD DO JUST THAT, AND LATTER WOULD BE DESIGNATING ONE OF ITS OWN PEOPLE TO CARRY OUT LIAISON WITH CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE IN DAMASCUS.

3. ZUBAIR COMMENT, AS DID FONMIN UNDER SECRETARY LAST WEEK, THAT OMAN DOES NOT FEEL FREE TO DEPART IN ANY MAJOR WAY FROM BOYCOTT GUIDANCE SET DOWN BY ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL ON BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE IN DAMASCUS. HOWEVER, OMANGOV DOES ADMINISTER BOYCOTT AS IT SEES FIT IN CASES INVOLVING ESSENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS AND MAJOR GOVERNMENT CIVIL AND MILITARY CONTRACTS. AS AN EXAMPLE HE REFERRED TO RECENT CASE REGARDING IMPORTATION IN COMING MONTHS OF FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT FOR NEW INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, WHICH EXPECTS TO OPEN ITS DOORS THIS FALL. ZUBAIR SAID OMANGOV HAS AGREED THAT POSITIVE COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN CERTIFICATION LANGUAGE MAY BE USED ON ALL DOCUMENTS FOR THIS PROJECT AND ALSO AGREED ON MODIFIED LANGUAGE REGARDING VESSELS USED FOR SHIPMENT. HE ASSERTED THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IN NORMAL COMMERCIAL CASE.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED NO PREVIOUS INDICATION THAT OMANGOV WAS CONSIDERING INTERNAL JUGGLING OF RESPONSIBILITY
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FOR BOYCOTT AFFAIRS. WE WILL BE STUDYING POSSIBLE IMPACT, PRO AND CON, OF THIS STEP UPON OAMNI PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS VIS-A-VIS THE BOYCOTT.
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